



The Return Of the Disinherited.

By Howard Fielding.

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BY CHARLES W. HOOLE.

MISS ACTON stood by the center table in the library with a match in her hand. The big room was as dark as a cave. She could see absolutely nothing. But what was it that she heard? Surely some one was moving softly over the heavy carpet.

"Who's there?" cried the girl. The only answer was a sound of scuffling feet. Some one was running toward the door communicating with the conservatory. Instantly the knob clicked sharply, but the door did not open because it was locked, as Miss Acton well knew.

The girl had an impulse to scream and another to run away, but her strongest desire was for light. She feared darkness more than the mystery that it hid.

It required less time than the tick of a clock for her to turn on the gas in the drop light and strike the match that was ready in her hand. The gas ignited with explosive suddenness. All that was in the room seemed to leap into being out of the vanishing shadows.

With his back against the conservatory door and his outstretched hands upon the wall as if to steady him stood a young man, tall, lean and pale. He wore a long black overcoat, but it was hung open and revealed the garb of a convict.

Miss Acton let her pent up breath escape from her lips with a sound like a sigh of relief.

"Do not be alarmed," she said. "I know who you are, and I will not betray you. Sit down, and we will decide what is best to do."

The convict's gaze was bent upon her with painful intensity. She seated herself by the table, and he advanced toward her with the hesitating stealthiness of a cat.

"Some one will come," he said in a whisper.

"No," she replied. "My aunt has gone to her room, and the servants have their duties. However, if you are afraid, you may lock that door."

She indicated the one by which she had entered, and he hastily locked it. Then he flung himself into an easy chair near to hers and fixed his eyes upon her as steadfastly as their nature would allow. They were dull blue eyes, but the extraordinary rapidity of their restless play gave them an effect of brilliancy which suited well the character of his face. It was a shrewd face lacking the higher elements of intelligence, yet far above the level of mere animal cunning.

"I read in a newspaper that you had escaped," she said. "but I did not suppose that you would dare to come here. Yet I believe that your father expected you and that he went away to avoid the risk of meeting you."

The convict said nothing, but the intensity of his facial expression was a distinct contribution to the conversation.

"You don't understand," said the girl. "Probably you don't know who I am. Let me tell you the whole situation in a few words. You knew of your father's second marriage?"

"Certainly."

"He married my aunt, and I came here to live with them by your father's great kindness. We knew that he had a son, and that his name could not be mentioned in this house, but neither my aunt nor myself had the slightest knowledge of the cause of the estrangement between you and him. It was only by accident that I found out where you were."

"How did it happen?" he asked.

"Through your letter to him last spring—the one that he returned unopened. I noticed the Sing Sing postmark on it when it came. Of course I did not then know it was from you, but he wrote the return direction upon the envelope. He sat at this table, and afterward I saw upon the blotter a part of the address reversed, of course, but legible. 'The State Prison,' and your middle name, 'Irving.'"

"Arthur Irving Vane. Well?"

"Then I knew that you were a convict, and it was easy to guess that your crime and your disgrace had caused your father to renounce you. But let me tell you a secret: he loves you yet. I know it; I am sure of it; and that is why I am going to help you tonight, though he would never forgive me if he knew it."

"And you read of my escape?"

"Yes. I read a few days ago that a convict named Irving had escaped with two others. I knew, of course, that you had dropped your last name for your family's sake when you were arrested."

There was a moment's silence. Then the young man leaned forward, with his face close to hers, and asked in a low, intense voice, "What are you going to do for me?"

"What do you need?" she asked.

"Food? A hiding place?"

He sprang to his feet so suddenly that the girl was frightened almost to the point of crying out.

"Money, money!" he whispered.

"That's what I need. With money enough I can get out of this country and begin a new life on the other side of the world. If I go back to prison, it will kill all the good that's in me. If I don't—if I get clean away—who knows what I can make of myself?"

"I believe that there is much truth in what you say," she replied. "If I could have advised you before you broke out of prison, I would have told you to serve your sentence and then begin life anew. But I know that if you are captured now you will have to serve years and years in addition to your original sentence. I cannot ask you to do that. It is very wrong of me, but I shall help you to escape. How much money do you need?"

"More than you can get, I'm afraid," said he gloomily. "I must make Australia somehow."

There was a safe built into the wall of the library. Miss Acton walked up to it, turned the knob of the combination lock and swung open the iron door. Within was a second door of thin metal, which the girl opened by means of a key that she took from her pocket.

There were books of account on each side of the safe within and between them three little drawers with pigeon-holes above and below. Miss Acton took a roll of money from the lowest of the drawers and handed it to the convict, who counted it rapidly.

"Four hundred," said he. "I can never do it with this."

"It is all that belongs to me," she said. "Of course we cannot touch your father's money."

An inward struggle convulsed the young man's slender frame.

"Why not?" he said at last. "You say that he still loves me."

"It would not be honest," she replied. "It would be theft. Can't you make this do?"

"Australia is a long way off," said he. "I think my father ought to contribute something."

"No," said she firmly. "I will not consent, and you should not ask me."

"I'm afraid it's all up with me," said the convict, sinking into a chair.

Miss Acton reflected deeply. "It is possible that if I asked my aunt she might do something for us," she said, "but I can't go to her now because there are people in the hall. They might look in here if I opened the door."

"There certainly are people out there," said he. "I've heard them talking for the last few minutes. But I could hide, you know."

"True," said Miss Acton, "and perhaps that's the best way. Get behind those curtains at the window."

The convict rose hastily. Miss Acton closed the inner door of the safe and put the key into her pocket. As she turned away she saw her companion standing with his face in his hands, while his form was shaken by convulsive sobs.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked the girl in tones of sympathy.

"It's nothing," he replied; "only—only you looked that door. You didn't trust me. Why should you? And yet if there was some one who did, some one in all the world who could see the little good there is in me."

Miss Acton took the key of the inner safe door from her pocket and laid it upon the table.

"You see that I do trust you," she said.

"Thank you, thank you, a thousand times," he murmured, and so strong

was his emotion that he positively staggered as he made his way toward his place of concealment.

Miss Acton passed out into the hall—this was now light—and was greatly surprised to see, in the reception room on the other side, her aunt in conversation with a young gentleman. He arose as Miss Acton approached, and she was the better able to admire his exceptionally fine physique. His face matched his form, being remarkable for strength and beauty, and, moreover, it had for her an aspect of familiarity.

He looked as much like the master of the house as was possible, considering the difference in their ages. "Mildred," said that young lady's

sister, in a voice betraying considerable agitation, "this gentleman is Dr. Vane, my husband's son."

Mildred knew that Mr. Vane had but one son, and the other things that she knew or suspected in that moment will readily occur to the reader. Without a word to the visitor, she darted back across the hall. The library door was locked. In another instant she was back again in the reception room.

"Dr. Vane," she cried, "there's a thief in the library. I have given him all my money and the key of the safe. I thought he was you."

"Thought he was I?" exclaimed the young man, astounded.

"Yes; I thought you were in Sing Sing and that you'd escaped and"—

"Thought I was in Sing Sing?" he cried. "So I was. I am assistant to the prison physician, and I have escaped—for a couple of days. But this thief! We must catch him. Has he locked the door? Then I'll break it down."

"No, no," exclaimed Mildred. "Run around to the window. He will escape that way. Auntie, call the servants."

She flew to the outer door, dragging Vane after her. In a moment he was racing around the house. Mrs. Vane had run through the hall to collect a posse of male dependents.

Mildred, left alone, hastened to the library door and listened. Instantly

"No news has yet been received of the whereabouts or fate of the American ship Wachusett, W. E. Mighell, her principal owner, has not, however, entirely despaired of the ship's arrival at the Islands. Unless fire has overtaken her, he thinks she may yet be heard from."

The report of Admiral Bradford, Chief of the Naval Bureau of Equipments, says that the survey by the United States steamer Nero for a trans-Pacific submarine telegraph cable between Honolulu and the Philippines was most successfully accomplished, and that a satisfactory route for an all-American cable to connect the Pacific Coast with the outlying colonial possessions of the United States in the Pacific and with China and Japan has been discovered, thoroughly explored, surveyed and mapped. The bureau is now ready to lay the cable at any time.

Vessels in Port—Kahului

Am schr S. T. Alexander, Ipsen, from San Francisco.

Am Sp Columbia, Matson, from Tacoma.

Am Brgn Lurline, Shaube, from San Francisco.

Island sch Alice Kimball from Honolulu.

Arrived.

Nov. 25.—Str Maui, Sachs, from Honolulu, 69 Portuguese.

Nov. 28.—Am brgn Lurline, Shaube, 29 days from S. F. mdse.

Nov. 28.—Island schr Alice Kimball, from Honolulu, cars for K. R. R. Co.

Nov. 28.—Str Claudine, from Honolulu.

Departures.

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Dec. 1.—Am schr S. T. Alexander, Ipsen for S. F. 5000 bags of sugar and 7 passengers.

Expected.

Am Sch Mary Dodge, from Tacoma.

Am bk A J Fuller, from Tacoma.

Am Sp Henry Failing, from New York, 211 days out, Corrugated Iron and railroad ties.

B. P. Cheney from Tacoma. An-Hope from Tacoma. Honolulu from Neweneste.

John D. Tallant from South America.

Honolulu Postoffice Time Table.

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Nov. 2 City of Peking S. F.

" 3 China Yokohama

" 6 Sierra San Francisco

" 9 Mariposa Colonies

" 10 Gaelic San Francisco

" 13 Doric Yokohama

" 17 Australia San Francisco

" 20 Hongkong Maru S. F.

" 26 Nippon Maru Yokohama

" 21 Warrimoo Colonies

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According to a cynic, every one marries nowadays except a few foolish women and some very wise men.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

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SHIPPING NEWS

There are about 120 vessels to arrive at Hawaiian ports, not including coasters.

The W. G. Hall will take the place of the Mauna Loa on the island run while repairing is being done and the Mikahala will take the place of the W. G. Hall.

During the last few moonlight evenings there has been melodious singing on the look out at Kahului. Wonder who the nightingales could be?

The new steamer John Ena now under construction on the Coast for the Inter Island Co. will in all probability reach here some time during February, 1901.

The Maui came in last Sunday morning about 10:30 A. M. with mail and 89 Portuguese for the Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Co. but left about 1 P. M. for Hawaii.

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